



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**WOMEN NEWS COVERAGE IN A MALAYSIAN  
AND AN INDONESIAN DAILY NEWSPAPERS IN 1999**

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**FBMK 2002 4**

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**2002**



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**By**

**RAHMANITA GINTING**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
In Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Science**

**January 2002**



This thesis is dedicated to my parents  
Dr H M Nurdin Ginting and Hj Nurhayati S  
for their endless urge for education, prayers, patience, perseverance, understanding  
and encouragement throughout the duration of my studies  
and  
my three brothers

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment  
of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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**Chairman : Associate Professor Md. Salleh Hj. Hassan, Ph.D.**

**Faculty : Modern Languages and Communication**

Coverage of women news represented in the newsworthiness determinants, news categories, the usage of photo and space measurement taken from the developing countries' perspective comprise an area that has not been thoroughly investigated. Hence, a study on women news coverage needs to be undertaken.

The objective of the study was specifically to determine (1) The newsworthiness determinants of Malaysian and Indonesian daily newspapers on news covering women (2) The identification and comparison the news categories in the women news covered by the Malaysian and Indonesian daily newspapers (3) The comparison of illustration of photo in news in terms of measurement and proportion of space taken by women news item with photo between Malaysian and Indonesian daily newspapers.

A constructed week method was applied in sampling the population, which comprised of 149 women news articles published between January 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1999 by the Utusan Malaysia (Malaysia) and the Kompas (Indonesia) newspapers. Statistical procedure employing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. Specifically, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used.

Most coverage of women news by two newspapers was concentrated in the special column news section. The study revealed that the standard newsworthiness determinants were considered but at varying degrees in determining the coverage of women news. Prominence becomes the first rank on the news determinant list for the Utusan Malaysia and Kompas newspapers. The study found that news categories were substantial however some categories were published more than the others. Culture and arts represented the highest number of news categories on women news covered by Utusan Malaysia and Kompas. The findings also showed that more than half of total women news coverage enclosed with photo.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**LIPUTAN BERITA WANITA DALAM AKHBAR HARIAN MALAYSIA  
DAN INDONESIA TAHUN 1999**

**Oleh**

**RAHMANITA GINTING**

**Janunari 2002**

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Liputan berita wanita yang tertera di dalam penentu-penentu nilai berita, kategori-kategori berita dan penggunaan photo dan ukuran ruang yang digunakan dari perspektif negara-negara membangun adalah salah satu bidang yang belum diterokai secara mendalam. Kerana itu, diperlukan untuk menjalankan kajian ke atas liputan berita wanita.

Secara khususnya, kajian ini dijalankan untuk menentukan (1) jenis penentu nilai berita yang digunakan pada akhbar harian Malaysia dan Indonesia dalam menentukan liputan berita-berita wanita, (2) menentukan dan membezakan kategori-kategori berita dalam menentukan liputan berita wanita oleh akhbar harian Malaysia dan Indonesia, (3) menentukan bagaimana penggunaan photo dan saiz ukuran photo yang digunakan dalam liputan berita wanita.

Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah 'constructed week' untuk mengumpul contoh populasi yang terdiri daripada 149 artikel-artikel berita wanita yang diterbitkan di antara Januari 1 – Disember 31, 1999 oleh akhbar-akhbar Utusan Malaysia dan Kompas. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) telah digunakan dalam menganalisa data. Khususnya deskriptif statistik frekuensi dan peratusan digunakan.

Penumpuan liputan berita wanita dari dua akhbar harian ini ialah pada ruang berita khas. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa penentu nilai berita yang piawai telah digunakan tetapi pada kadar yang berbeza dalam menentukan liputan berita-berita wanita. Penonjolan merupakan ciri pertama dalam penentuan berita dalam Utusan Malaysia dan Kompas. Kategori-kategori berita juga didapati termasuk sebahagian daripada liputan tersebut, tetapi sesetengah kategori dilaporkan lebih dari yang lain. Budaya dan sastra mewakili bilangan terbanyak kategori berita wanita yang tersiar dalam Utusan Malaysia dan Kompas. Keputusan kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa lebih dari setengah jumlah liputan berita wanita menggunakan photo.



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Finally, I understand that I am indebted to a lot of people who contributed in one or the other in making this project a success. May Allah reward them all for their contributions

I certify that an Examination Committee met on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2002 to conduct the final examination of Rahmanita Ginting on her Master of Science thesis entitled "Women News Coverage in a Malaysian and an Indonesian Daily Newspapers in 1999" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

  
Rahmanita Ginting

Date: 01/04/2002

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ABC	: Audit Bureau of Circulation
ASEAN	: Association of South East Asia Nations
CAP	: Consumers' Association of Penang
KMD	: Koran Masuk Desa – A Newspaper for Villages
MCA	: Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	: Malaysian Indian Congress
PDBI	: Pusat Data Bisnis Indonesia – Indonesian Business Data Centre
PWI	: Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia – Indonesian Journalists Association
SARA	: Suku (Ethnic group), Agama (Religious), Ras (Racial) and Antar Golongan (Intergroup)
SCA	: Selangor Consumers' Association
SPS	: Serikat Penerbitan Surat Khabar – Indonesian Publishers Association
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SIUPP	: Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers – Press Publication Business Licence
SRM	: Survey Research Malaysia
UMNO	: United Malay National Organisation

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the subject of this study. It provides information on the background of the study, problem statement, research question, research objectives, significance of the study then scope and limitations and definition of terms.

#### **Background of the Study**

The challenge facing newspapers today is that striking a balance between social responsibility and commercial viability. In a competitive environment, the goal providing a free responsible press must be supported by sound business practices. It is in this balancing act where conflict arises (Rosario-Braid & Tuazon, 1988).

The press and newspapers in particular have come along way to reach their current status in society. The industry has developed with time, while going through some rapid stages of transformation and enlargement which were deemed normal and constructive whenever necessary. Influence of newspapers is great due to the nature of Indonesian society. Because the press operates primarily as a medium of the literate subelite, it tends to reflect their interests. Research by Crawford shows that 70% or more of the content of Indonesian-language daily newspapers in Jakarta (Crawford, 1971).

Most previous content studies have treated newspapers as variables and news categories and news stories as observations (Al-Enad, 1991) Newspapers are important agents of socialisation People belonging to various segments of life depend on newspapers apart from the other media, to learn of events happening within and beyond their surroundings Newspaper readership is associated with specific information seeking, in depth knowledge about a subject and guidance Newspaper exposure is associated with greater knowledge of topics covered in newspaper for both children and adults and seem to be more effective at conveying detailed information than other media (Weaver & Buddenbaum, 1980)

Women contribution to the development of the nation is now actively encouraged and acknowledged by the state Half of Malaysia's population consists of women and out of this, 44% are involved in the labour forces as compared to 87% of men (Jamilah, 1992)

The rapid technological advancement in information and communication system during the last two decades has brought both positive and negative in women's equality and participation in social life The positive impact is the widening job opportunities for women and serves on governing boards that influence media policy whereas the negative impact as the result of the continued projection on negative degrading images of women in media communication (Zakiah, 1997)

In news media, research indicates that women are mostly absent. In fact, according to Gallagher (1981) no country with available data reported that more than 20% of news was about women and in most cases the figure was much lower. This has changed little since 1981 and most existing news about women is trivial – related to family status or appearance.

Content analysis has been used to study media messages. Since it is a way of examining content quantitatively, the beliefs and interests of editors and publishing organisation, the preference of readers (on the assumption that materials successfully published for a particular group will accurately reflect that group's preference) and even the cultural patterns of whole societies have been studied using this research technique (Stempel & Westley, 1981).

The most widely circulation national Malay daily newspaper in main market centres through out Malaysia is Utusan Malaysia and it is also the superior medium for reaching the white collar/housewife segments of the population whereas in Indonesia, Kompas is the highest circulation of Indonesian daily newspaper. Both newspapers will be investigated in covering women news.

### **Problem Statement**

According to Heyzer (1985) development strategies pursued in many countries of the world especially the Third World are affecting women's position. Women forces in many countries complained of being denied equal access to education, technology, training, meaningful employment and decision-making.

A recent study by the Freedom Forum indicates that women are seldom used as sources for stories of national or international importance, but rather are quoted as victims or because of their relationship with a male who is central to the story. Women's by-lines appeared more frequently than men's over stories whose topic was courts case, crime, religion, health science/medicine and human interest profiles (Zoch & Turk, 1998).

The amount of gender-related media research is now very large although in part it follows lines of theory pioneered with reference to social class and race, it has several new dimensions, especially those based on psychoanalytic theory and drawing on the wider field of feminist studies. The gendering of content may also be studied at the point of production since most media selection and production works are carried out by men. The attention on the construction of gender in media text is only one aspect of the relevance of gender for communication theory.

Studies of media audience and the reception of media content have shown that there are relatively large differences according to gender in manner of using media and the meanings attached to the activity. Different kinds of media content, their production and use of are also associated with expressions of common identity based on gender and with different pleasures and meanings acquired (McQuail, 2000).

According to sixth annual Women, Men and Media survey of print and broadcast news, the good news is that the number of women appearing on newspapers' front page has more than doubled since 1989. The bad news is that on those same pages, women mentioned in a positive light tended to be entertainers rather than leaders and authorities (Hernandez, 1994).

A newspaper plays a variety of communication roles within a social system – community, county, state or nation. Before the days of radio and television the newspaper's primary editorial role was to report and interpret 'news happening' – those events and actions affecting the lives of people. In the role of reporting, confirming and interpreting 'news happening', newspapers appeal to the widest possible audience. At the same time, newspapers provide a communication channel for special audience groups. Many women pay most attention to the society pages, while many men find sports page most interesting (Read, 1972).

Recent research has shown that through the year there has been little improvement in either the quantity or quality of news and other information about women in the world's media (Byerly, 1995).

In Malaysia, Utusan Malaysia is ranked as the most read national daily newspaper and it has been beaming Malay journalism for over 15 years with its wide category of readers. It provides the latest in media development – featuring in depth news, views, reports and interesting articles for the most discerning and demanding readers. Its new vibrant style and excellent content appeals to a cross-section of readers (Asiah, 1997).

Survey Research Malaysia (SRM) reported that from June 1993 to June 1994 the readership of Utusan Malaysia was 1,633,000. Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABS) report showed Utusan Malaysia's audit circulation as 246,917 (June 1994) copies per issue. The latest readership of Utusan Malaysia in 2000 was 1,420,000 meanwhile, the circulation as 234,542 copies (Media Guide, 2001).

In 1980, Indonesia had 84 daily and 76 weekly newspapers. Of those daily papers, 25 % were published in Jakarta, the nation's capital city. The country also had 33 weekly magazines, 32 biweekly, 22 monthly and five bulletins. The total circulation of those publications was about 5.2 million. Of this total, daily newspapers accounted for about 2 million on an average day. It means that Indonesia daily newspapers are able to reach only 1.5 percent of the nation population. Jakarta itself, with over six million people consumes than a million newspapers per day. These data, based on circulation, suggest that newspaper readership among Indonesian people is low (Manangka, 1992).

As of 1992, the total circulation of press publications was at 12,076,496. Daily newspapers have circulation of 4,694,676 copies, weekly newspapers 3,396,832 copies and weekly magazines 1,495,146 copies. The media coverage in Indonesia is designed to support its national development strategy, which is aimed at attaining equity, economic growth and national stability (Idris & Daud, 1998). The 1998 figures show that Indonesia's 79 dailies had circulation of 5.02 million. The 20 national dailies had a circulation of 2.74 million while the 59 regional dailies had circulation of 2.29 million (World Association of Newspapers, 1999). Meanwhile, the latest audit circulation of Kompas newspaper as 575,362 copies per issue (Media Index, 2001).



World population reported by United Nations is six billion while in Indonesia in 12 October 1999 the total population is 206.8 million people comprises 102.9 million male and 103.9 million female (Mohamad, 1999).

Statistically, in Indonesia there are an increasing number of women both in education and employment. In 1980, 29.7% of women were still studying at school. In 1987, the percentage increased to 39.6%. In 1994, the percentage has increased to 45.28%. Nowadays, many women in Indonesia participate in activities outside their homes.

In developing countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, the history of the press is very much interlinked with the history of national movement and struggle for independence. Every country has its own press system in reporting the news. Malaysia has a national philosophy called *Rukunegara* and has five principles to achieve the objective of philosophy. While in Indonesia, the philosophy is called *Pancasila*. Malaysia and Indonesia has the same root of language that is Malay.

Since every country has its own press system and policies, this study will investigate the coverage of women news printed in Malaysian and Indonesian daily newspapers in the highest circulation of Malaysian and Indonesian daily newspapers which are Utusan Malaysia and Kompas respectively. In order to get the how Malaysian and Indonesian newspapers cover the women news.

It seems that women are aware that they have a right to be active in public activities. However, the progress that has been achieved by Indonesian women, needs to be analysed because they still face many difficulties to actualise their potential. Indonesian society in general and the Indonesian government particular seem to place women in a subordinate position (Suryochondro, 1996).